



**A NEW NATION**—In the classic Georgian capitol on a hill at Montgomery, Ala., delegates from southern states, comparing their task to that of the founding fathers at the first Continental Congress, met in 1861 to form a new nation. From a list of names they picked "The Confederate States of America" and, despite certain objections, named Jefferson Davis as President. The photo above shows crowds standing on the grounds of the capitol awaiting word from the meetings. The sessions were kept secret, and until Davis' election was announced, little information was forthcoming. (UPI Telephoto)

## Confederate States Are Formed

By MERTON T. AKERS  
UPI Correspondent

In the classic Georgian Capitol on a hill in Montgomery, Ala., 44 delegates from six southern states met Feb. 4, 1861, to create a new nation. Delegates from a seventh state, Texas, were on their way, the state having seceded Feb. 1.

The Montgomery gathering was distinguished, the average ability higher than "any of the 16 Congresses I have been in at Washington," Alexander H. Stephens, a delegate of Georgia, concluded.

The delegates likened their task to that of the Republic's founding fathers at the First Continental Congress. Free men shaking off the shackles of tyranny, they called themselves in the metaphorical language so dear to the hearts of the orators of the day.

**New Nation Formed**

There was no Thomas Jefferson to write their aspirations into a ringing declaration of independence; no Washington to head up an army of liberation. But the will to break off from the rest of the United States was resolute and in four days the delegates formed a provisional government, adopted a provisional constitution and in one more day — on Feb. 9 — elected a provisional president — Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, one-time U.S. senator and secretary of war.

They called their new nation the Confederate States of America, although Thomas R. R. Cobb, another Georgian, suggested "The Republic of Washington" to snare the seceded southerners were going back to first principles. Another name put forth, "The Confederacy of the Cotton States," was right on the target because Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas still were outside and at the moment showed no inclination to go along.

But parallels between the Montgomery assembly and the First Continental Congress were few. Where the Continental Congress worked in open session, the Confederate Congress drew the blinds and worked secretly. Where the Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, the largest city in the colonies, the Confederate Congress selected a comparatively obscure capital, founded only 44 years before, and passed up such more famous cities as Charleston and Columbia, S.C., or Savannah and Milledgeville, Ga. One parallel did exist without doubt, Montgomery originally was named New Philadelphia.

Sessions of the Confederate Congress were so secret that little is known about them even yet. Not until 1904 was a skimpy journal published and then by the U.S. government. Only glimpses of the meetings have come through in letters of delegates.

On the surface the decisions of the delegates of the six states were unanimous. Underneath individual ambitions clashed, an inevitable result when 44 politicians meet together.

Howell Cobb of Georgia was named to head the one-chamber Congress by virtue of his fame as secretary of the treasury under President Buchanan. He also was angling for the presidency of the budding nation. So was his colleague, Robert Toombs, shaggy, tobacco-chewing Georgia planter and former U.S. senator. A mild boom also blossomed briefly for Stephens.

With the provisional constitution — copied almost in full from the U.S. Constitution — out of the way and a committee named to draw up a permanent document, the business of electing the first president got under way.

The question of whether Davis was drafted for the office as he contended, or whether he was elected accidentally as Stephens claimed to the day of his death, seems destined to go down in history as unsolved.

There is little doubt that Davis wanted to be commander-in-chief of the Confederate Army rather than President. And it seems just as certain that Georgia rated and expected to obtain the presidency. Both ambitions broke on the rocks of the overwhelming desire for unanimous action so as to present a solid front to the world.

Cobb soon faded out of the presidential picture. He had jumped to the Whig side in the Compromise of 1850 and the '61 Democrats had long memories.

When the Georgia delegation met the night of Feb. 8 to name its choice for the election next day — each state has only one vote — Toombs indicated his willingness to undertake the presidency if it came "cordially." But then Georgia heard that four states had plumped for Davis — Mississippi, his home state, abstaining from recommending him in deference to his wishes for a military position.

To maintain unanimity, Georgia went along and Davis was elected, 6-10-0. As a sop, Stephens was elected vice president, also unanimously.

Stephens claimed a foul — that Toombs really was the choice for the presidency — and his animosity against Davis dated from that day.

Davis was working in his rose garden at Briarfield, the Mississippi plantation, his brother, Joseph, had given to him, when a messenger arrived with the news. Mrs. Varina Howell Davis wrote later that her husband dropped his shears in surprise and turned pale when he read the telegram.

"He looked so grieved that I feared some evil had befallen our family," she wrote. "After a few minutes of painful silence he told me, as a man might speak of a sentence of death, as he neither desired nor expected the position he was more deeply depressed than before."

The Vicksburg telegraph office was being held open for his reply and Davis immediately wired acceptance.

The clanging plantation bell summoned Davis' slaves. He made a short speech to them — the last time he would see them in bondage — and distributed supplies, giving Uncle Bob, a rheumatic old hand, an extra quantity of blankets to shut out the Mississippi River chill.

Another slave, Isaiah Montgomery, rowed Davis out into the river to Old Tom Leathers' steambot the Natchez. It headed north to Vicksburg, and the President-elect of the C.S.A. was on his way to Montgomery and his inauguration ceremonies. Mrs. Davis would stay and set the plantation in order before following with the children.

Enroute Davis, with sincere regret, resigned his commission as major general of the Army of (the state) Mississippi, putting away forever the specially designed uniform that went with it.

Another president-elect was on his way to inauguration, too. The day before Davis renounced a military career, Abraham Lincoln had said farewell to Springfield, Ill., and started a 12-day journey to Washington.



Small Worlds Around Us  
By Lynn W. Watkins  
(Register & Tribune Syndicate, 1961)

### Would an Animal Commit Suicide?

The daily press frequently runs a story about the strange and unusual behavior of someone's pet dog that apparently attempts to end its own life.

One report tells of such an instance, when after several attempts failed, the dog finally tried to kill itself by going on "a hunger strike," refusing all food in spite of the fact an examination indicated the animal was in perfect health.

Committing voluntary suicide is a human prerogative, you think, and anyone who claims differently is certainly "teched in the head." Maybe yes, and maybe no — no one can say for sure. But the evidence so far presented indicates a strong possibility that self-destruction does happen among animals, aside from man, and rather frequently.

**Complex Subject**

Here is a problem in thought processes, and the possibility of delving into the inner recesses of a living brain, be it that of a man, monkey or mouse, is a complex and little understood subject. Here, even the most advanced psychologists and psychiatrists are only a small child wandering and all but lost in a vast wilderness.

Many records of apparent suicide among animals are on record, even instances where it was actually premeditated and successfully carried out. No one knows what thought processes and wild ideas go through an animal's mind at such a time, any more than we know exactly what goes on in the mind of a human when self-destruction seems to be "the only way out." There must be a powerful motive to prompt such an action.

**Rate Increases**

As the intelligence rate goes up in higher animal forms, the apparent frequency of self-destruction seems to be greater. Every person who has been in long contact with animals, such as a zoo keeper or pet owner, has had experiences where animals will die when there is absolutely no disease or apparent physical defect.

Nearly a ny pet owner familiar with dogs can recall times when a pet develops blindness or any of a dozen ailments, and in desperation does something that has all the outward appearance of suicide.

A recent newspaper story tells of a dog, nearly blind and severely crippled with rheumatism, who licked his master's hand and deliberately swam away, to drown in a lake. The owner called, but for the first time in its life the dog failed to obey the call of the master. He never looked back, but swam away, and sank beneath the water. It seems that to some of the lower animals, as well as to some people, death by self-destruction offers the only escape from real or fancied troubles.

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